

# Be well, and well informed

*At CalPERS, we care about your health. We collect and analyze information on our health care trends and costs. The data provides opportunities for all of us to learn how to use our health care benefits more efficiently, stay healthy, and contribute to affordable health care for everyone.*

## Preventive Screenings Can Save Your Life and Pocketbook

Preventive screenings and early detection for diseases cannot only save your life, but they can help all of us save a little on health care costs. Patients who avoid preventive care screenings often endure expensive trips to emergency rooms, a lifetime of high cost medications, and further damage to their body.

The good news is that CalPERS HMO members exceed the national average for breast cancer screenings. Unfortunately, they fall below the national average for cervical cancer and colorectal cancer screenings.

We encourage you to take advantage of free preventive care and get regular screenings to help detect cancer early.

- **Breast cancer:** Mammogram screenings can reduce mortality up to 35 percent for women ages 50-69. Mammograms can also detect breast cancer one to four years before a lump can be felt, and can detect about 85 percent of non-symptomatic breast cancers.
- **Cervical cancer:** Early detection of this disease is especially critical because the disease rarely causes pain or symptoms until it has advanced. The five-year survival rate for localized cervical cancer is 90 percent, but drops to 13 percent once the cancer has spread.
- **Colorectal cancer:** The five-year survival rate with early diagnosis is 90 percent, and decreases substantially in late-stage diagnoses. Removal of polyps found in screening can prevent 90 percent of colorectal cancers, and screening can reduce mortality 80 percent.

For more information about the health of CalPERS members, visit CalPERS On-Line at [www.calpers.ca.gov/bewellinformed](http://www.calpers.ca.gov/bewellinformed).